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Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph on page 8 beginning at line 19 with the following:

For purposes of the present invention, by "sterilized" matrix or scaffold it is meant a matrix or scaffold which is treated via a single procedure or a combination of procedures which reduce the number of microorganisms capable of growing in the matrix or scaffold under conditions at which the matrix or scaffold is stored and/or distributed below a level determined by a standardized sterilization protocol and/or validation test such as USP 24<1211> or USP 24<71> subsections <1211> and <71> of the U.S. Pharmacopoea.